

DRAFT Executive Summary

The Wisconsin Early Childhood Advisory Council was established in December, 2008 and continues work focused on the initial directive that its work should be dedicated to building a comprehensive, sustainable early childhood system. Wisconsin's vision is that: "Every child will be healthy, nurtured, safe and successful." In the last year highlights of Wisconsin's effort to strengthen the early childhood system included:

- **Increased Resources for Home Visiting.** Over \$4 million dollars in competitive federal funds were secured that will be deployed to further expand evidence-based home visiting programs in Wisconsin.
- **YoungStar Successfully Launched.** Wisconsin's quality rating improvement system has successfully enrolled Wisconsin's early childhood programs that receive Wisconsin Shares; all programs that submitted their applications as of June 30, 2011 are now rated. The most recent data available shows that x % are 5 star; ... 4 star (will fill in with year end #s)
- **Statewide Early Childhood Literacy Assessment Recommended.** It is anticipated that the Governor's Read to Lead Task Force will recommend X
- **Four-Year Old Kindergarten (4K) Continued to Reach More Children.** Four-year-old kindergarten (4K) continued to expand; at the start of the 2011-2012 school year, the program is in 89% of the elementary school districts, serving 46,022 children. Community Approaches continue to expand with over 100 school districts partnering with child care and/or Head Start to implement 4K in community sites.

The Council met four times in 2011 and hosted an annual public input session in August, 2011. The year's work oversaw some important milestones and events that continue to shape the early care and education landscape in Wisconsin and follow recommendations spelled out in the Council's first annual report published in December, 2010. Examples of specific initiatives guided by the ECAC in 2011 include the following.

- **Submission of a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT-ELC).** Grant articulated ECAC-endorsed reform agenda and proposed major activities consistent with ECAC 2010 and evolving goals proposed in this report.
- **Recommendations for Screening and Assessment.** A series of recommendations are being finalized by the Screening and Assessment workgroup that will provide a vision for an aligned screening and assessment process for young children in the state. This work is supported by the ECAC with consultation from Katherine Magnuson, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin.
- **Ad Hoc Home Visiting Committee Work.** The Committee identified outcome priorities, developed two sub-committees on evaluation, program improvement and played a critical role in grant preparation that resulted in additional funding.
- **Early Childhood - Longitudinal Data System Project Charter Signed.** The Department of Children and Families, the Department of Health Services and the Department of Public Instruction signed the EC-LDS Charter that establishes goals, objectives and deliverables of an early childhood data system.
- **Recommendation of a Public-Private Funding Board.** An Ad Hoc Committee of business leaders and ECAC members designed a structure for a public-private partnership to support an early childhood system and quality improvement efforts.
- **Professional Development Policy Scan Completed.** Strategic priorities for further aligning early childhood career opportunities and career paths in Wisconsin were developed and form the basis of proposed ECAC recommendations included in this report.

Based on the activities in 2011, the ECAC has proposed the following goals for 2012.

1. **Continue to Develop a Coherent Approach to Screening and Assessment.** The State should:
 - a. adopt a timeline with recommended ages for screening and assessment of a young child's development and related health matters;
 - b. work with state departments and other public and private partners to develop cross-sector approaches to promote the implementation of this schedule for all children; and,
 - c. continue to align screening and assessment efforts with a state data system;
 - d. The State should develop and implement a comprehensive statewide kindergarten assessment process.
2. **Create an Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (EC-LDS)** including identification of key indicators to as a public report card on early childhood and securing resources to implement the work plan that is being developed.
3. **Develop a Public-Private Board to Support Early Childhood Efforts.** The board will leverage resources and engage communities to improve early childhood development. It will be directly linked to the ECAC that would launch effort by connecting with an existing 501(c)(3) organization and later transition to a more permanent structure.
4. **Expand Evidence Based Home Visiting.** Support Families and Communities by:
 - a. implementing a comprehensive training and technical assistance plan to assist all existing and new home visiting programs in moving to evidence based models; and,
 - b. focusing all programs on three critical home visiting outcomes- reducing child abuse/neglect, improving child health and improving school readiness.
5. **Align and Improve Access to Early Childhood Professional Development Opportunities.** Continue to develop a comprehensive cross-sector professional development system, including:
 - a. alignment of early learning standards with K-12 common core standards through connections among DPI, DCF, DHS, and the Registry;
 - b. facilitating implementation of best practices, including communities of practice, coaching, mentoring, and ongoing technical assistance to improve early childhood quality; and,
 - c. exploring the enhancement of the progression of early childhood teaching credentials and licenses that align and cross systems.
6. **Improve Young Child Health and Wellness.** The 2010 ECAC System Assessment identified a number of issues, including oral health, infant social and emotional health, improving connections between children in child welfare and high quality early education experience, and access to mental health services for children and families.

Moving forward in 2012, Wisconsin will document the progress toward identified goals. Additional efforts will include finalizing operating principles for the Council, working to better develop a brand for Wisconsin's early childhood system development efforts that have been guided by the Council, and, expanding efforts in the area of promoting safe and healthy children.